

Edwards Leads Fight for Loan Guarantees to Expand Comanche Peak Power Plant

Committee Approves Funds to Help Expand Clean Nuclear Power Nationwide, Create Thousands of Jobs

(Washington, D.C.) –U.S. Representative Chet Edwards today hailed \$25 billion approved by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development for federal loan guarantees that will expand the use of clean nuclear power across the country. These loan guarantees are critical for the planned expansion of Comanche Peak in Somervell County, which will create thousands of jobs for Somervell, Hood, and Johnson counties and increase the power supply to millions of Texas homes.

Congressman Edwards, vice chair of the Energy and Water Appropriations

Subcommittee said, *“This is great news for our district and country because it will help create thousands of jobs and provide our country with affordable, safe and clean energy while making money for taxpayers.”*

On June 24th, the 2011 Energy and Water Appropriations bill hearing was cancelled after Edwards objected to the elimination of funding in the bill for the Energy Department's nuclear loan guarantee program. The original draft omitted the \$36 billion loan guarantee authority requested by the Administration. In addition to the \$25 billion for nuclear loan guarantees included in the 2011 Energy and Water bill, approximately \$9 billion for nuclear loan guarantees has also been included in the 2010 Supplemental Appropriations bill, which has passed the House recently and is awaiting action in the Senate.

Edwards continued, *“We are at the dawn of a nuclear power renaissance in the United States, which will create hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs and the clean energy our nation needs. To eliminate or dramatically cut the funding for nuclear loans would be devastating for the jobs and economic growth our country desperately needs. A clear bipartisan majority of House Members favor the expansion of nuclear power in America, and I will do everything I can to work in partnership with them to support this effort going forward.”*

It is estimated that **5,000 jobs** would be created during 5 years of construction and over **500 permanent, full-time jobs** would be created at Comanche Peak once construction is completed according to Luminant, who manages Comanche Peak. Luminant estimates that the Comanche Peak expansion would provide power to an additional 1.7 million Texas homes in addition to the 1.2 million homes currently served.

The loan guarantees for new plants are fully financed by the nuclear industry at no cost to the taxpayer. Companies applying to receive a Department of Energy loan for developing nuclear power projects must pay a fee called the credit subsidy cost that covers the federal government’s risk in providing the guarantee.

Luminant is planning to expand operations at the Comanche Peak plant and has applied to the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission to build two new 1,700 watt reactors. Comanche Peak currently employs 1,100 jobs in Somervell County and surrounding counties and supplies

energy to 1.2 million Texas homes annually. Luminant estimates it will spend \$15 billion for expansion, which would provide power to an additional 1.7 million homes. Luminant plans to begin construction on the new units at Comanche Peak by 2013 once loan guarantees are approved.

In 2008, Edwards supported Comanche Peak's expansion application by writing to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission stressing the *"important role of the expansion in creating many new highly-skilled jobs"*, and supported the Energy Policy Act of 2005 that created the Nuclear Loan Guarantee Program, and has strongly supported funding for nuclear loan guarantees.

Edwards is vice chair of the House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee.